

28 February 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Analysis Branch, DD/CR  
FROM : Chief, Publications Staff, OES  
SUBJECT : Release of CIA/RR OM 62-1, The Berlin Wall,  
February 1962, Confidential, to Foreign  
Governments

1. It is requested that the attached copies of subject report be forwarded as follows:

160-164  
165  
166-168  
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170-171  
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2. All ORR responsibilities as defined in the DD/CR memorandum of 13 August 1952, "Procedures for Dissemination of Finished Intelligence to Foreign Governments," as applicable to this report, have been fulfilled.

14 Attachments

DOCUMENT NO. 2  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☒  
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CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C 1989  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 1989  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 19/8/29 REVIEWER:

CONFIDENTIAL

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Copy No. 67

28 FEB 1962

# GEOGRAPHIC INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

15 MAR 1962

CIA/RR GM 62-1  
February 1962

## *THE BERLIN WALL*



DOCUMENT NO. 1  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐  
☒ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE:  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 29/8/79 REVIEWER:

25X1

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND REPORTS

### WARNING

This material contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States within the meaning of the espionage laws, Title 18, USC, Secs. 793 and 794, the transmission or revelation of which in any manner to an unauthorized person is prohibited by law.

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## THE BERLIN WALL

The Berlin wall is now a fact of life. It has and will continue to have fundamental influences on the everyday life of Berliners and on East-West negotiations concerned with the city and issues related to it. The purpose of this report is to describe the wall as it stands today to provide a framework for evaluating incoming intelligence. The miscellany of makeshift barriers that comprised the wall in the fall of 1961 has now been replaced by permanent structures. Changes can still be expected but they probably will be of a minor in character and will have little effect on the functioning of the wall.

### Evolution of the Wall

The border between East Berlin and West Berlin was adopted by the European Advisory Commission on 12 September 1944. It passes through the center of the city in a jagged line that follows the borough boundaries as established by a decree of 27 March 1938. Recent growth of the city, however, has shown little regard for these limits. As a result the border in some places runs along the middle of streets or cuts through buildings and across plots of land.

Even before 13 August 1961, all streets that crossed the border were closed to vehicular traffic or were under surveillance by East German Police. Vehicular traffic was checked but restriction on pedestrians was limited to an unusual spot check. The U-Bahn (elevated electric railroad) and the O-Bahn (underground street railroad) also crossed the border at several points. Although there were facilities for inspection and control of traffic, such restrictions as were applied were relatively ineffective, as the number of refugees attested.

The sealing of crossing points between East and West Berlin began before daybreak on 13 August 1961. Initially, the methods and material used were fairly crude and expeditious. Beginning about 15 August, however, more permanent barriers were erected at a few points and later at others, and the barriers began to take on more of the characteristics of a real wall. Mayor Brandt made the first public reference to the border barriers as a "wall" in his speech to the Bundestag on 18 August, when he compared it to the "Great Wall of China." On 14 September the *Spendauer Volksblatt* referred to the barriers as "The Wall of Shame." The title was adopted readily and has been used frequently since that time.

At first, several of the crossing points along the border were blocked by a single roll of concertina barbed wire stretched across the street and attached at the ends to buildings or existing walls or fences. Other points were blocked merely by removing a section of the cobblestones and placing the removed stones in layers in front of the excavation. In still other places the two methods were combined. Subsequently, concrete and wooden posts were installed and wire fencing was attached, large concrete slabs and stone construction began to appear at various points along the wall, and windows and doors of buildings on the border were sealed. Gradually, the hastily constructed expedients began to assume the character of the obstacle now commonly called

The evolving wall and its rigid controls prompted several dramatic escapes by crashing through the barriers. The East German authorities responded by restoring the destroyed portions and tightening security along the wall. Such efforts did not reduce appreciably the number of breakthroughs, and on 13 November another mass construction effort was organized and barriers across

likely swarms of escapees were reinforced. A large demolition on activity was conducted on the results of 3 bodies were found. The demolition was carried out by Friederichsmasse and other crossing points, strengthening the walls, adding traffic lanes, installing tank barriers, and narrowing the passageways for the border, many residents living near the border were evacuated, homes and gardens were destroyed, and a cleared area was established to provide the border with an effective fire zone.

Concerning the swelling of the border between the sectors, the East German authorities tightened security along the sector/central boundary. Double wire fences, plowed strips, watch towers, and bunkers were constructed, if not destroyed. The borders of West Berlin are now as tight as, if not tighter than, the borders of East Berlin.

### Characteristics of the Wall

The popular designation of the entire barrier system along the eastern border as "the wall" has created some false impressions. Actually, the wall is a system of barriers and obstructions of many different types, not a single continuous wall. The wall is about 100 miles long (about 50-60 miles), it closely parallels but does not always coincide with the international border. It is made up of many different types of barriers and obstructions, including walls, fences, barbed wire, landmines, and other types of barriers. The wall traverses areas that are built up on one or both sides. It is in the middle section that most of the masonry walls have been built. The rest of the wall is made up of many different types of barriers and obstructions. In many places foliage such as preexisting barriers to east-west movement as oaks and other trees, and other types of barriers, such as barbed wire, and other types of barriers and secondary obstructions such as mine, mortar, tank barriers, belts of mine-potential, cleared strips, and observation posts. Here and there, there are some masonry walls, but they are not continuous. There is no visual contact between East and West Berliners. Action on the announced plan to build a wall between East and West Berlin would be a major step in the East's attempt to isolate the western sector of Berlin. The wall has been limited to the suburban areas at either end of the border, where the clearing has consisted mainly of rowing oaks, gardens, tool sheds, and

In the heart of the city the wall consists almost entirely of masonry or the sealed facades of buildings. This stretch, about 13-1/2 kilometers long, extends from just south of Bornholmer Strasse to Schilling Brücke, except for about 1-1/3 kilometers where the water barriers forming the boundary are paralleled by barbed-wire fences.

The strongest part of the wall is at the Brandenburg Gate. Here prefabricated concrete slabs have been arranged in layers forming a wall 7 feet high and 6 feet thick with reinforced steel posts. To the north and south of the Brandenburg Gate, the wall is made of prefabricated concrete slabs about 1 foot thick. At the corners and above the concrete blocks are used; they are also used to add extra height to parts of the wall. In most places the wall averages 6 feet high, but along Bernauer Strasse it is 10 feet high. The wall is topped by Y-shaped iron rods strung with barbed wire. In some cases, broken glass has been added. Masonry barriers also extend for about 4 kilometers along the western edge of Treptow and for another 4 kilometers along the eastern edge.

**A-RDP79-01006A000100230001-1**  
Road blocks now will off all but 7 of the 80 former border-crossing points.  
At these authorised crossing points, obstructions have been placed across the  
road, forming a maze with relatively narrow openings to facilitate control of  
vehicular traffic.

Tank barriers consisting of heavy steel tripods anchored in the road with cement back up the masonry wall at several places. One stretch of tank barrier runs from Voss Strasse south of the Reichstag ruins to Stresemann Strasse. Others are located on Zimmerstrasse at Wilhelm Strasse and at Friedrichstrasse, on Sebastian Strasse, and along the S-Bahn tracks between Wilhelmsruh and

Wherever the border in Berlin follows along waterways (a total of 13.3 kilometers), the barrier characteristics of the waterways have been exploited, and have been reinforced on one or both banks by barbed-wire fences and in places by stone walls. Stationary or mobile guard posts provide additional reinforcement. Railroad lines and yards, which parallel the Intracity border for about 10.3 kilometers, have barbed-wire fences on one or both sides. In some places rail sidings also have been exploited as barriers.

There is considerable variety in the way fences are employed as barriers. In some places they are the primary obstacle; in other places they are subsidiary obstacles. The barbed-wire fences consist of 6 to 8 strands of heavy barbed wire mounted on sturdy reinforced concrete posts. In many places they are erected in a system of 2, 3, or 4 parallel fences, 6 to 7 feet high. The area along the fences may be lighted at night. In other places, chain-link fences are topped by barbed wire. Barbed-wire coils are now used to

In the suburbs, cleared areas have been established to permit better control of the barriers. Former garden colonies -- such as Schönbühl, Debiels, Späthsfelde, Grunewald, and Am Rindgrün -- have been cleared of trees, tool sheds, or anything else that might obstruct the view from the observation towers.

All these physical barriers are policed by a large complement of Soviet and/or East German security personnel. The guards are disposed in both stationary and mobile units. Stationary posts include a number of observation posts at strategic points, particularly in suburban and central areas. Within the inner city, observation posts are also located on the top floors of some buildings. An East German observation post has even been established on the facade of the Church of the Atonement. Other stationary posts guard sensitive and vulnerable areas, primarily street intersections. Mobile guards patrol the barriers. Their mobility -- the uncertainty as to where they are located at any given moment -- provides the physical barriers with additional security.

By virtue of the wall, the sector boundary has acquired the aura of an international boundary without a change in its legal status. It functions effectively and is now almost as much a part of the Iron Curtain as any of the legally recognized international boundaries dividing East from West. The recent erection of buildings at several crossing points, presumably to be used in implementing the new East German customs law when finally enacted, is another step in the direction of making the sector boundary function as

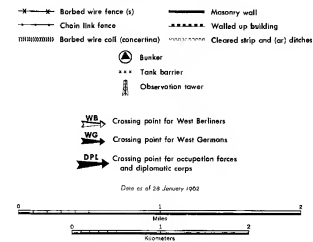
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\* Authorized East Germans and East Berliners presumably can cross at any border points still open.

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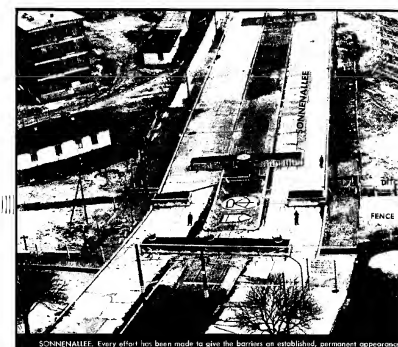
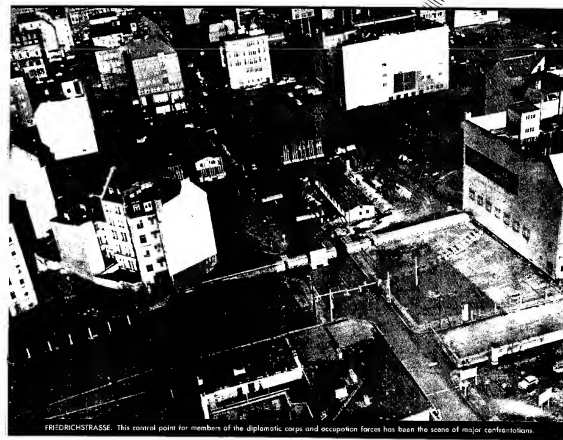
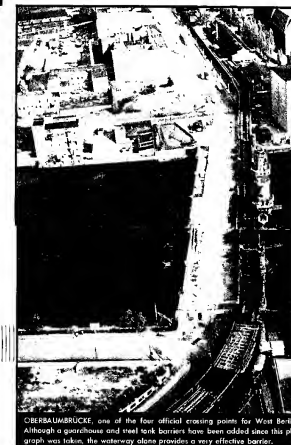


# BERLIN



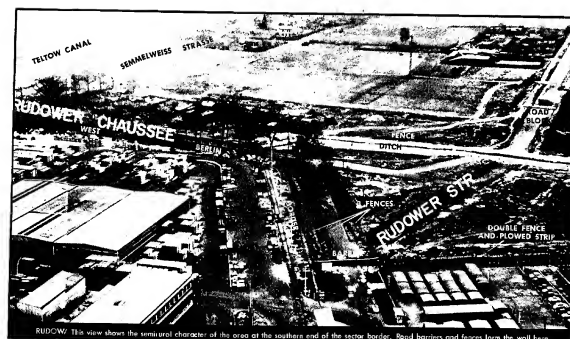
Base map: AMS 1:75,000 series W542 1st ed.  
Scale permits graphic representation of the width of the barriers.

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## OBSERVATION TOWERS ALONG THE SECTOR BORDER BETWEEN EAST AND WEST BERLIN

- Between Blankenfelder Chaussee and Schildower Weg (Luban) (25 Nov. 1961).
- At the curve in Hauptstrasse in Rosenthal 600m from the sector boundary.
- In the factory area of VEB Bergmann-Borsig northwest of S-Bahnhof Wilmshof there are 4 towers. (2 are old, the third was put up about 3 Dec. 1961, the 4th was put up about 21 Nov. 1961).
- Just northeast of the S-Bahnhof Wollankstrasse (12 Dec. 1961).
- In the cemetery 200m north of Sandkrugsbrücke (5 Nov. 1961).
- On the drainage canal between Freierchen and Trappower Brücke (18 Nov. 1961).
- At Trappower Brücke (17 Nov. 1961).
- Luhnerplatz (28 Nov. 1961).
- Opposite the corner of Vaidelberger Strasse (5 Dec. 1961).
- Hafen Bots (9 Sept. 1961).
- Between Massante Brücke and Ernst Koller Brücke about 400m from the Tellow Canal. (11 Jan. 1956).
- 300m north of Massante Brücke (15 Dec. 1961).
- Near Dalkensteig opposite the US Army Installation in Rudow (Sept. 1961).
- 500 northeast of the junction of Deutschdamer Strasse with the sector boundary (Rudow). (12 Sept. 1961).



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